

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6244

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, January 31, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to prekindergarten.

**Brief Description:** Establishing an accreditation process for prekindergarten programs.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe, Carlson, Eide, Kastama, Rasmussen, Regala, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Franklin and Fairley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 1/23/02, 1/31/02. [DPS-WM]

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6244 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen, Regala and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Heather Lewis-Lechner (786-7448)

**Background:** Under current Washington law, the State Board of Education (SBE) establishes accreditation standards and procedures for all Washington common schools. Prior to 1995, Washington law also required SBE to establish standards and procedures for the voluntary accreditation of public and nonpublic preschool programs. That section was repealed in 1995.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** SBE adopts standards and procedures for the voluntary accreditation of public and nonpublic pre-kindergarten programs. In establishing these standards, SBE reviews nationally developed standards and the accredited programs must provide children with the academic skills that are needed for the children to be successful as they enter into the next level of school. All accredited pre-kindergarten programs are posted on SBE's website. Prior to adoption of any standards, SBE must present the standards and procedures to the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate for the committees' review and comment.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The prekindergarten accreditation standards created by the State Board of Education (SBE) require that the prekindergarten programs provide children with the academic skills that are needed for the children to be successful as they enter into the next level of school. The accreditation standards no longer must require the programs be designed to prepare children to meet the Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Prior to adoption of any standards, SBE must present the standards and procedures to the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate for the committees' review and comment. The provisions creating a misdemeanor for falsely advertising a program as having SBE accreditation are removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** It is currently hard for parents to know which preschools will prepare their children for the future. This bill will help parents make good, informed decisions. Private and public preschools want to know that they are preparing the children in their programs for the future and this bill provides standards to help guide them. This is not establishing a curriculum. It is a way of establishing what children should know when they leave the preschool.

**Testimony Against:** The concept is good but there are fiscal concerns. There will be a cost related to receiving and processing the accreditation applications. There are also costs possibly associated with the misdemeanor language because there will be investigative costs if someone does file a complaint that a program is claiming to be accredited when it is not. Due to the last budget cutbacks, SPI is not funding administrative staff support for the current voluntary accreditation programs.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Dan Sherman, WFIS, private schools; CON: Larry Davis, SBE, SPI.